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Aircraft transporting drugs busted in Liberal

Attorney General credits Southwest Kansas Drug Taskforce, agency cooperation

Attorney General Steve Six and Director Bob Blecha of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation announced today that an aircraft transporting drugs was busted in Liberal late last week and about 50 kilograms (or about 100 pounds) of cocaine seized.

"I'm proud of the work local law enforcement and the Southwest Kansas Drug Taskforce did to prevent these drugs from making it to our streets," Six said. "Through coordination, the Southwest Kansas Drug Taskforce and its partners can reduce and deter drug trafficking and sales in our state."

On Thursday, October 22, 2009, the Department of Homeland Security identified a suspicious aircraft and pilot that had landed in Liberal, Kansas. The Liberal Police Department was contacted and they requested assistance from the Southwest Kansas Drug Taskforce and the Kansas Bureau of Investigation.

At approximately 5:00 p.m., law enforcement arrived at the Liberal airport. Based on information provided by the Department of Homeland Security, a canine search was conducted and a positive alert confirmed. Law enforcement obtained a search warrant for the aircraft and conducted a search. During the search, two large suitcases containing cocaine were identified and seized. The suitcases contained approximately 50 kilograms of cocaine.

The pilot and co-pilot were identified through further investigation and arrested late Thursday night at a Liberal motel. The aircraft originated out of California and was believed to be destined for Ohio. The two suspects have been charged in U.S. District Court and await indictment. Their names will be release following the formal indictment.

Through the investigation, another suspect was identified in California. He is not yet in custody. The investigation continues.

The following agencies are assisting in the investigation: Kansas Bureau of Investigation, Southwest Kansas Drug Taskforce, Liberal Police Department, Seward County Sheriff's Department, Beaver County Oklahoma Sheriff's Department, Seward County Attorney, United States Attorney's Office for the District of Kansas, and the Kansas Attorney General's Office.

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